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AUTHOR Brand, Alice, Comp.; Graves, Dick, Comp.
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ABSTRACT

This packet summarizes the ideas, concepts, suggestions, and speculations growing out of a think tank which explored the uncharted region beyond cognitive learning. The packet contains: (1) an alphabetical list of 1991 and 1992 participants; (2) a list of participants' interests according to key terms; (3) summaries of small group discussions (including the topics "Imagery, Imaging," "Empathy," "Gender Issues," "Archetypes," "Meditation," "Kinetics, Body Wisdom," and "Creative Dramatics"); (4) two presentations from the event ("Guidelines of Composing" by Sondra Perl and "Voice" by Peter Elbow); (5) an account of the wrap up discussion; and (6) a short description of "clustering." (HB)

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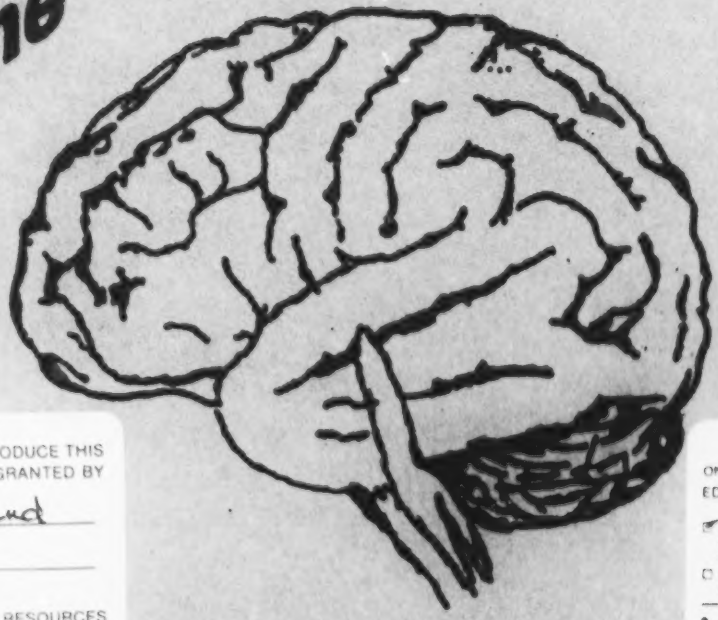

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A summary of the ideas, concepts, suggestions and speculations
growing out of the think tank
"Beyond the Cognitive Domain: Frontiers in the Teaching and Learning of Writing"
Alice Brand and Dick Graves, Co-Chairs
CCCC
Cincinnati, Ohio
March 20, 1992

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Participants in 1991 and 1992
BEYOND THE COGNITIVE SESSIONS

Marilyn Alfred
University of South Florida
Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620
(813) 974-2421

14165 Welsingham
Largo, FL 34644

(813) 596-9785

Chuck Anderson
University of Arkansas at L.R.
2801 S. University
Little Rock, AR 72204
(501) 569-8311

5428 Wren Road
Little Rock, AR 72204

(501) 565-9343

Andy Anderson
Johnson County Community College
12345 College Blvd.
Overland Park, KS 66210
(913) 469-8500 ext. 3698

10038 Craig
Overland Park, KS 66212

(913) 341-9262

Judith Barbanel
CUNY A.C.C.
Springfield Blvd.
New York, NY 10021
(718) 631-6379

62 Pierrepont Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

(718) 875-2435

Susan Becker
Illinois Central College
One College Drive
East Peoria, IL 61635
(309) 694-5358

9208 Timber Lane
Peoria, IL 61615

(309) 692-2903

Kathleen Bell
University of Central Florida
P.O. Box 25000
Orlando, FL 32816
(407) 823-2212

Susan Blau
Boston University
640 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3150

537 Mass Ave.
Acton, MA 01720

(508) 263-1690

Karen Bowser
Penn State
W112 Olmsted Building
Middletown, PA 17057
(717) 948-6296

3608 Horsham Dr.
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

(717) 732-5112

Alice Brand
SUNY Brockport
128 Hartwell Hall
Brockport, NY 14420
(716) 395-2343

11 Selden St.
Rochester, NY 14605

(716) 232-1828

Tom Brennan
University of South Alabama
Mobile, AL 36688

Sandra Burkett
Mississippi State University
PO Box 3312
Mississippi State, MS 39762
(601) 325-7777

PO Box 3312
Mississippi State, MS 39762

(601) 323-6135

Carol Burns
University of Toledo
Toledo, OH 43606
(419) 537-3318

5040 Breezeway Drive
Toledo, OH 43613

(419) 471-9002

Betsy Burris
Stanford University
School of Education
Stanford, CA 94305

610 Twelve Acres Drive
Los Attos, CA 94022

(415) 941-2703

Constance Chapman
George State university
Division of Developmental Studies
University Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 651-3360

48 Maypop Lane
Atlanta, GA 30035

(404) 808-7270

Linda Calendrillo
Bradley University
English Dept.
405 Bradley Hall
Peoria, IL 61625
(309) 677-2467

2011 W. Ayres
Peoria, IL 61604

(309) 676-4355

Gary Christensen
Macomb Community College
44575 Garfield Road
Mt. Clemens, MI 48044
(313) 286-2145

42443 Eldon Avenue
Mt. Clemens, MI 48044

(313) 228-7324

Chris Christie University of Wisconsin Parkside Wood Road Jenosha, WI 53212 (414) 595-2380	3157 N. Fratney Milwaukie, WI 53212 (414) 244-5375
Elizabeth Coiddens Auburn University Dept. of English 9030 Haley Center Auburn, AL 36280 (205) 844-9018	952 Tisdale Circle Auburn, AL 36830 (205) 826-1972
Diane Colvin Sinclair Community College & Clark State Community College 444 West 3rd Street Dayton, OH 45402	624 Sartell Drive Fairborn, OH 45324 (513) 878-9298
Barbara Craig Del Mar College Baldwin & Ayers Corpus Christi, TX 78404 (512) 886-1428	602 McClendon Corpus Christi, TX 78404
Phil Dansdill	7 Wilderness West Newtown, CT 06470
Timothy Dansdill University Massachusetts Harbor Campus Boston, MA 02125	c/o Burke 216 Prospect St. Belmont, MA 02178 (617) 484-6006
Howard Davis Tunxis CC Rtes 6 & 177 Farmington, CT 06032 (203) 679-9571	75 Avonwood Road Avon, CT 06001 (203) 674-9541
Ann Dawson Westark Community College Grand at Waldron Avenue Ft. Smith, AR 72904 (501) 785-7217	4605 S. 96th Street Fort Smith, AR 72903 (501) 452-4371

Mary Deming Georgia State University Box 872 University Plaza Development Studies Atlanta, GA 30303 (404) 651-3360	317 Connecticut Ave. N.E. Atlanta, GA 30307 (404) 373-4146
Alan Devenish Lake Forest College Lake Forest, IL 60045 (708) 234-3100 ext. 438	10 Campus Circle Lake Forest, IL 60045 (708) 234-6246
Becky Dibiasio Assumption College 500 Salisbury St. Worcestor, MA 01609 (508) 752-5615 ext. 311	57 Winfield Rd. Holden, MA 01520 (508) 829-2610
Peter Elbow University of Massachusetts - Amherst Amherst, MA 01003	47 Pokeberry Amherst, MA 01003 (413) 549-0024
Elizabeth English Lake-Somter Community College 9501 U.S. Hwy 441 Leesburg, FL 34688 (904) 365-3581	8915 Silver Lake Drive Leesburg, FL 34788 (904) 728-4228
Chip Engelmann Indiana University of Pennsylvania Indiana, PA 15705	831 Oak Street Indiana, PA 15701 (412) 349-6828
Susan Engman Monroe Community College 1000 E. Henrietta Rd. Rochester, NY 14623 (716) 292-3381	872 Washington Avenue Rochester, NY 14617 (716) 342-7445
Ruth Fischer George Mason University 4400 University Drive Fairfax, VA 22030 (703) 323-2220	10331 Mockingbird Pond Ct. Burke, VA 22015 (703) 250-2923

Kristie Fleckenstein
Purdue University Calumet
Department of English and
Phil.
Hammond, IN 46323
(219) 989-2653

153 S. Circle
Bloomingdale, IL 60108

(708) 529-9703

Jon Ford
College of Alameda
555 Atlantic
Alameda, CA 94705
(415) 522-7221

165 Bryant St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

(415) 327-4925

Regina Foehr
Illinois State University
English Department
Normal, IL 61761
(309) 438-7848

38 Sunset Road
Bloomington, IL 61701

(309) 829-1493

Helen Fox
University of Michigan
1025 Angell Hall
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(313) 936-3145

919 Brooks Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

(313) 996-5919

Tahita Fulkerson
TCJC South Campus
5301 Campus Dr.
Ft. Worth, TX 76119
(817) 531-4587

35 Chelsea Dr.
Ft. Worth, TX 76134

(817) 293-0689

Jim Fuller
Avon Middle School
375 West Avon Rd.
Avon, CT 06001
(203) 673-3221

401 Riverton Rd.
Riverton, CT 06065

(203) 379-3088

Don Gallehr
George Mason University
4400 University Drive
English Department
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 993-1168

191 High St.
Warrenton, VA 22186

(703) 347-0016

De Gallow
University of California
HTC 902
Irvine, CA 92717
(714) 856-6188

12237 Pevero Avenue
Tustin Panch, CA 92680

(714) 838-0515

Cinthia Gannett
University of New Hampshire
at Manchester
220 Hackett Hill Road
Manchester, NH 03102
(603) 668-0700

Christina Gibbons
University of Massachusetts
at Amherst
100 Wm T. Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125

RD 2 Box 10F
Brattleboro, VT 05301

(802) 257-0115

Stephen Gordon
Snowden High School
150 Newburg St.
Boston, MA 02115
(802) 267-9805

70 Varnum St.
Arlington, MA 02174

(802) 643-7617

Richard Graves
Auburn University
5040 Haley Center
Auburn, AL 36849-5212
(205) 844-4434

415 Auburn
Auburn, AL 36830

(205) 887-6626

Frances Jo Grossman
Georgia State University
University Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 651-3354

1000 Mason Woods Drive
Atlanta, GA 30303

(404) 636-7263

Cynthia Hagen
New Hampshire College
2500 N. River Rd
Manchester, NH 03104
(603) 645-9606

Oxford 13, 1465 Hooksett Rd
Hooksett, NH 03106

(603) 268-0202

Joyce Hancock
Jefferson Community College
109 E. Broadway
Louisville, KY 40202
(502) 584-0181

3315 Richard Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206

(502) 893-0777

Janice Hays
University of Colorado at
Colorado Springs
Colorado Springs, CO 80933
(719) 593-3188

4835 Stanton Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

(719) 594-9460

Nancy Hayward
Indiana University of PA
English Dept.
Indiana, PA 15705
(412) 357-2123

358 N. 9th St.
Indiana, PA 15701

(412) 463-1406

Sarah Henderson
University of Portland
Portland, OR 97203
(503) 283-7239

8407 S.W. 46th Avenue
Portland, OR 97219

(503) 244-9354

Rebecca Hettich
Purdue University
English Department
West Lafayette, IN 47907
(317) 494-3721

4535 S 175 W
Lafayette, IN 47905

(317) 474-9517

Carolyn Hill
Towson State University
English Department
Towson, MD 21204
(301) 830-2862

12401 Westmore Ct.
Bowie, MD 20715

(301) 262-8230

Carolyn Hill
Notre Dame College
2321 Elm St.
Manchester, NH 03104
(603) 669-4298

RR #1, Box 225
Plymouth, NH 03264

(603) 536-1944

Pat Hoy
Harvard
Harvard Expository Writing
12 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-4829

Mathes House
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

(617) 493-7169

Elaine Hughes
Nassau Community College
Garden City
Garden City, NY 11530
(516) 222-7190

Box 976
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

(212) 316-4202

George Jensen
Southwest Missouri State
University
Department of English
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 836-4797

3070 E. Impala Ct
Springfield, MO 65804

(417) 882-5597

Jean Johnson
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
(301) 405-3763

3710 N. 30th St.
Arlington, VA 22207

(703) 528-7536

Mary Ann Jones
Tuskegee University
English and Foreign Languages
Tuskegee, AL 36088
(205) 727-8108

PO Box 1187
Tuskegee, AL 36088

(205) 727-5167

Libby Jones
Berea College
CPO 914
Berea, KY 40404
(606) 986-9341 ext. 6442

114 Highland Drive
Berea, KY 40403

(606) 986-7449

Sara Jonsberg
University of Massachusetts-Amherst
School of Ed. (Furcello Hall)
Amherst, MA 01003
(413) 538-2260

33 Silver Street
S. Hodley, MA 01075

(413) 538-8706

Steven Katz
North Carolina State University
Box 8105
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-3854

5100 Wickham Road
Raleigh, NC 27606

(919) 851-6542

Zoe Keithley
Northeastern Illinois University
Chicago Teacher's Center
770 N. Halsted Street
Suite 420
Chicago, IL 60660

1243 W. Granville
Chicago, IL 60660

(312) 973-2572

Pat Keyes
Kirkwood Community College
English Department
Cedar Rapids, IA 52245
(319) 398-5381

328 Brown #3
Iowa City, IA 52245

(319) 339-1273

Sarah Larson
Dekalb College North
2101 Womack Rd.
Dunwoody, GA 30338
(404) 551-3158

5135 Davantry Dr.
Atlanta, GA 30338

(404) 394-6620

Judy Levin
University of Nebraska
at Lincoln
English Dept.
Andrews Hall
Lincoln, NE 68588
(402) 472-3191

5515 Marcy St.
Omaha, NE 68106

(402) 551-4775

Alice Lind
Southwest Virginia Community
College
Box SVCC
Richlands, VA 24641
(703) 964-7207

Rt 2, Box 135B
Cedar Bluff, VA 24609

(703) 880-3255

Bonnie Lisle
UCLA Writing Programs
271 Kinsley Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(213) 206-1950

4260 Nogales Drive
Targana, CA 91356

(818) 342-3908

Mel Livatino
Truman College
1145 Wilson Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640
(312) 989-6252

2756 Lincolnwood Dr.
Evanston, IL 60201

(708) 491-9151

Chris Loschen
Brandeis U.
Waltham, MA 02259
(617) 736-2130

1577 Washington St.
N. Newton, MA 02165

(617) 332-1289

Linda Mahen
Towson State University
219E Lintricum
Towson, MD 21204
(410) 830-2866

28 Greenvale Road
Westminster, MD 21157

(410) 876-1597

Barry Maud
University of Arkansas at
Little Rock
English Dept.
2807 S. University
Little Rock, AR 72204
(501) 569-3160

500 Nape Valley #1030
Little Rock, AR 72211

(501) 229-5291

Fred McDonald
Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, AL 36088
(205) 727-8105

14 Ledbetter Park
Auburn, AL 36830

Marilyn Middendorf
Embry Riddle Aeronautical
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
(904) 239-6648

1069 Oak Forest Circle
Port Orange, FL 32119

(904) 760-0645

Chris Miller
St. Mary's College of
California
English Department
Moraga, CA 94575
(510) 631-4470

Ruth Mirtz
University of Nebraska
at Lincoln
202 Andrews
Lincoln, NE 68588
(402) 472-8803

2613 Washington #2
Lincoln, NE 68502

(402) 474-3370

Janet Minc
University of Akron
10470 Smucker Road
Orville, OH 44667
(216) 693-2010

542 Parkside Drive
Akron, OH 44313

(216) 836-8901

Mary Minock
Wayne State University
6001 Cass Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 577-4612

902 Brown
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

(313) 668-7088

Walter Minot
Gannon University
Erie, PA 16541
(814) 871-5806

2702 Perry St.
Erie, PA 16504

(814) 455-8202

Martha Molumphy
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02147
(617) 552-8533

210 Chestnut Hill Ave. #5
Brighton, MA 02135

(617) 783-8288

Linda Moore
UAB
Hum 219
Birmingham, AL 35294

522 24th Avenue NW
Birmingham, AL 35215

(205) 853-5758

Anne Mullin
Idaho State University
Campus Box 8010
Pocatello, ID 83209
(208) 236-3662

11 Cedar Hills Drive
Pocatello, ID 83204

(208) 232-1491

Judith Oster
Case Western Reserve University
Department of English
Cleveland, OH 44106
(216) 368-2367

4431 University Parkway
Cleveland, OH 44118

(216) 381-0711

Scott Oury
Triton College
2000 5th Ave.
River Grove, IL 60171
(413) 456-0300

83 Morgan Circle
River Grove, IL 60171

(413) 549-6310

Sondra Perl
Lehman College
Bronx, NY 10468
(212) 960-8758

5605 Palisade Ave.
Bronx, NY 10471

(212) 601-4740

Diane Phillips
Wright State University
Millet Hall
English Department
Dayton, OH 45435

2560 Sunny Wood Court
Beaver Creek, OH 45434

(513) 426-0279

Margaret Pobywajlo
UNH @ Manchester
220 Hacker Hill Road
Manchester, NH 03102
(603) 668-0700 ext. 255

56 Back River Road
Bedford, NH 03102

(603) 669-7845

Robert Ratner
Florida University
Dept. of English
Miami, FL 33199
(305) 348-3327

Nedra Reynolds
Miami University
356 Bachelor Hall
Oxford, OH 45056

Sue Rickels
Laredo Junior College
W. Washington Ave.
Laredo, TX 78040
(512) 722-5218

1601 Fremont
Laredo, TX 78040

(512) 722-3235

Gabriele Rico
San Jose State University
San Jose, CA 95192

David Roberts
Samford University
Birmingham, AL 35229

Marti Singer
Division of Developmental Studies
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 651-3361

2481 Zachary Woods Dr.
Marietta, GA 30064

(404) 428-7284

Helen Sitler
Seton Hill College
Office of Continuing Education
Greensburg, PA 15601
(412) 838-4208

511 N St. Clair Street
Ligonier, PA 15658

(412) 238-6027

Tricia Smith
Prince George's Community College
301 Largo Road
Largo, MD 20772

3238 Highland Ln.
Fairfax, VA 22031

(301) 573-2926

Helen Snively
Harvard Grad School of Education
1350 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02138
(617) 547-1326

1 Fayette Park
Cambridge, MA 02139

(617) 547-1326

Heather Speirs
Westmont College
955 LaPaz Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 565-6079

2002 El Camino
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

(805) 966-4835

Nancy Stahl
IUPUI
425 University Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 274-3635

7 Lincoln Ct.
Carmel, IN 46032

(317) 848-5270

Sandra Stanley
North Hennepin Community College
7411 85 Avenue No.
Minneapolis, MN 55445
(612) 424-0851

2205 So. Hill Lane
Minneapolis, MN 55416

(612) 927-7637

Kay Stewart
University of Alberta
305 Humanities Centre
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T662E5
(403) 492-2236

11438 75 Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T660H7

(403) 435-1558

Lois Rosen
University of Michigan
at Flint
Flint, MI 48502
(313) 762-3285

1170 Bryant Drive
East Lansing, MI 48823

(517) 337-2275

Vivian Rosenberg
Drexel University
Department of Humanities-
Communication
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(215) 895-6870

1408 Juniper Avenue
Elkins Park, Pa 19117

(215) 782-1109

V. Elaine Ross
Lewis University
Rt. 53
Romeoville, IL 60441

1029 W. Downer Place
Aurora, IL 60506

(708) 892-8525

Laura Scanlon
New York City Technical College
300 Jay St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 260-5392

196 Berkeley Pl.
Brooklyn, NY 11217

(718) 783-6558

Susan Schiller
Central Michigan University
215 Anspach Hall
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
(517) 774-3101

1820 S. Crawford H-15
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

(517) 773-1471

Gabriella Schlesinger
University of Connecticut
Avery Point Campus
Groton, CT 06340
(203) 446-1020

44 Granada Terrace
New London, CT 06320

(203) 442-3841

Jacqueline Senteney
Jostens Learning Corp.
6170 Cornerstone Court East
San Diego, CA 92121
(619) 587-0087 ext. 6546

5461 Taft Avenue
LaJolla, CA 92037

(619) 459-7111

Mark Shadle
Eastern Oregon State College
1410 Loso Hall
LaGrande, OR 97850
(503) 962-3747

910 G Avenue
LaGrande, OR 97850

(503) 963-8378

Susan Simons
Community College of Denver
Box 600, P.O. Box 17336
Denver, CO 80217
(303) 556-8455

2365 Holly Street
Denver, CO 80207

(303) 388-3474

Nancy Stone
N. Hennepin Community College
7411 85th Ave. North
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 425-1850

333 Oak Grove, Apt. 309
Minneapolis, MN 55403

(612) 874-1475

Charles Suhor
NCTE
1111 Kenyon Road
Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 328-3870

314 Arbours Drive
Savoy, IL 61874

(217) 359-2909

Nat Teich
University of Oregon
Department of English
Eugene, OR 97403
(503) 346-3911

2350 Spring Blvd.
Eugene, OR 97403

(503) 343-6038

Linda Thomas
Midway College
512 E. Stephens St.
Midway, KY 40347
(606) 846-5361

3432 Greenlawn
Lexington, KY 40517

(606) 271-4137

Trudelle Thomas
Xavier University
English Department
Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45207
(513) 681-8042

717 Hand Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45232

(513) 681-8042

Jean Timberlake
Xavier University
English Department
Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45207
(513) 556-3918

3530 Beldare
Cincinnati, OH 45232

(513) 281-7288

Winifred Tripp
Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, AL 36088
(205) 727-8303

PO Box 1165
Tuskegee, AL 36088

(205) 727-9643

Terri Tomaszek
Davenport College
415 E Fulton
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 451-3511 ext. 1389

2649 Richard Drive
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506

(616) 942-1287

Jean Trounstire Middlesex Community College 33 Kearney Square Lowell, MA 01852	97 Cardigan Road Turksbury, MA 01876 (508) 640-1239
Elizabeth Wallace Western Oregon State College English Department Monmouth, OR 97361 (503) 838-8389	1880 Whitcomb Ct. Salem, OR 97304 (503) 581-1555
Demetrice Worley Bradley University Department of English Peoria, IL 61625 (309) 677-2482	RR1, Box 66 Secor, IL 61771 (309) 744-2555
Anne Wyatt-Brown University of Florida Program in Linguistics Gainesville, FL 32611 (904) 392-0639	3201 NW 18th Ave Gainesville, FL 32611 (904) 377-2189
Paul Bator Santa Clara University Department of English Santa Clara, CA 95053 (408) 554-4127	2361 Donner Pl. Santa Clara, CA 95050 (408) 246-1224
Twila Yates Papay Rollins College Box 2655 Winter Park, FL 32789 (407) 646-2191	639-113 Laurel Oak Lane Altamonte Springs, FL 32701 (407) 831-7153

Participant Name	1992 Participant Interests in Teaching and Learning Beyond the Cognitive Domain
Becker, Susan	collective unconscious, personal archetypes
Blau, Susan	archetypes, reader's theatre
Burkett, Sandra	the spiritual
Burris, Betsy	"magic in writing"
Christensen, Gary	Gardner's perspective on body, music, spiritual awareness
Deming, Mary	reading and writing
Devenish, Alan	associative language
Engelmann, Chip	emotion therapy
Engman, Susan	body and mind
Fleckenstein, Kristie	imagery and affect
Foehr, Regina	spiritual, metephysical
Gallehr, Don	meditation
Gallow, De	therapy
Gannett, Cinthia	journal, gender
Gibbons, Christina	kinetics, meditation

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Grossman, Frances Jo	emotion
Hays, Janice	unconscious, connected knowing
Henderson, Sarah	personality, individual differences
Hettich, Rebecca	apprehension
Hoy, Pat	Jung, archetypes, the conscious and so-called unconscious
Jensen, George	personality
Jones, Libby	legitimating the domain beyond
Katz, Steven	language and music/non-rational thought
Keithley, Zoe	story
Keyes, Pat	non-verbal ways of knowing
Levin, Judy	body sense of connection
Lind, Alice	imaging, visualization, body/mind connection
Miller, Chris	meditation, guided visualization
Mirtz, Ruth	emotions, non verbal thought
Mullin, Anne	unconscious
Phillips, Diane	therapy
Rosen, Lois	gender

Schiller, Susan	affect, images
Senteney, Jacqueline	writer's block and emotion
Sitler, Helen	holistic learning
Snively, Helen	therapy
Stahl, Nancy	right brain activities
Suhor, Charles	meditation
Thomas, Trudelle	body work, meditation
Timberlake, Jean	painting
Tomaszek, Terri	interdisciplinary studies, assessment
Trounstire, Jean	imagery, connecting
Wallace, Elizabeth	Polanyi's tacit dimension
Worley, Demetrice	mental images and imaging abilities

REPORTS FROM THE 1992 THINK TANK

The Small Group Experience at the 1992 Think Tank

Imagery, Imaging

Table Leader: Kristie Fleckenstein, Purdue University, Calumet

Recorder: Susan Schiller, Central Michigan University

Participants: Alan Devenish, Lake Forest College
George Jensen, Southwest Missouri State University
Barry Maid, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Kim Murray,
Elizabeth Wallace, Western Oregon State College
Demetrice Worley, Bradley University

Our group began by attempting to define imagery/imaging. The difficulty of naming one definition quickly emerged. We drew distinctions between pictorial images the mind receives from the external world and the mental evocations created by the mind when the imagination is stimulated by language. The relationship between images and the imagination aroused our exploration about the potential for explicit connections between images and archetypes we recognize through cultural schema. Schema theory was connected to archetypes which literary imagery might elicit, but to counteract this idea it was pointed out that A. Paivio connects memory to images and claims schema theory is insufficient since it is linguistically based.

At this point our discussion turned to pedagogy. Mike Rose's Lives on the Boundary was cited because he used images and affect to teach writing. We thought students should have experiences exploring the real image in verbal texts. In other words, we want our students to answer, "What does the image look like?"

We generally agreed that the academy leaves out elements in conversations and focuses on cognition almost exclusively whenever mentality is discussed. We wanted to know how meaning is evoked--how it becomes a lived-through text when visual thinking is a primary mode. Visual thinking, as a separate type of thinking, was thought to be too limiting; our discussion then turned to holistic models that combine visual and verbal thinking.

We adamantly agreed that imagery is a result of an ACTIVE mind and that high energy is required to engage imaging. Susan Aylwin's work was presented in a handout that Kristie had prepared prior to the session. We looked at Aylwin's three

modes: linguistic, visual, enactive and talked about how these are connected to commitment scripts that are based in affect rather than in propositions. We all saw that thinking is based in affect. Frederick Bartlett and Susan Fiske support this viewpoint. However, Rom Harré suggests affect follows, rather than precedes, cognition because affect is socially constructed.

It was suggested that emotions might split out and become refined during human maturation. Babies and young children can switch from one extreme emotion to a different extreme emotion in seconds because their emotions have not yet split and they have not learned which emotion to use in a situation. Emotions that may not be differentiated at birth become more evident as language emerges. And through language people learn to display appropriate emotions in particular situations. Since Vygotsky suggests that language is affectively based because children use images as pre-verbal language, we thought images might attract emotion in a unique way; a LaMaze childbirth technique supported this idea.

"Visual literacy" and ways we might promote such literacy in pedagogy came up next. We thought students might be too easily manipulated through images and that they are desensitized by a passivity that is caused by being bombarded by images in popular culture. We know we need to make our students aware of the emotional baggage that images carry.

We were dismayed and frustrated because art is often the first subject to be cut from elementary curriculum. The pedagogical shift from images to words that occurs around the third grade level was also seen as a weakness in curriculum. The academy also routinely cuts creative writing programs whenever budgets run low; yet art and creative writing classes offer primary exposure to imagery/imaging. Without any doubt the academy promotes and accepts rational scientific approaches and values aesthetic holistic approaches much less. Naturally, our group would like to change this.

Empathy

Members: Anne Marie Voss, Ball State University
Nathanial Teich, University of Oregon
Judy Levin, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
Helen Snively, Cambridge, MA
Rebecca Hettich, Purdue University

Recorder: Rebecca Hettich
Purdue University

Can written rhetoric successfully employ Rogerian empathy?

Classical rhetoric promotes "accommodation" for persuasion--that is, utilizing strategies to effect an intended adherence to an idea from the audience. Rogerian 'rhetoric' suggests "accommodation" for cooperation--that is, the rhetor may adjust his or her original intent based on audience response. this makes sense for oral communication and the client-therapist relationship, but how can this work for writing?

In cases of conflict or controversy, is it the rhetor's role to be a facilitator or mediator between two or more perspectives on an issue? If a rhetor's position is adversarial, how can cooperation be achieved? Does 'giving ground' mean giving up one's position? The deliberative forum in classical rhetoric may be an example of this sort of open-ended discussion where several positions are mediated: a facilitator can be brought in to mediate, or each speaker can act as a cooperative mediator on behalf of the group.

If empathy is important to rhetoric, where does it originate? Is it emotional? Cognitive? Is it simply a means to gain loyalty from an audience, or is it intended to resolve conflicts without dominating another? In other words, empathy is not only a means to have rational goals in common with another, but a means to feel safe, a means to share values. If we do not feel safe with another person, but we still share goals, can this be called empathy? The psychoanlytic view suggests empathy as a cognitive understanding of another's position as well as his/her emotional need. But understanding is partially emotional in intent: we try to understand for more reasons than to be accurate.

What are practical applications of Rogerian rhetoric?

In the student conference context, empathy is used as a strategy to elicit a feeling of safety, to motivate the student, to gain deeper appreciation of the student, and to recognize the value of the student.

Is this facilitation? "Facilitation" can mean several things:

teacher-to-student problem solving
teacher-to-student mutual respect
problem solving between peers (interlocutor)
neutral 'outside' mediator for conflict resolution between 2 or more parties

Can Rogerian empathy facilitate 'accurate' transfer of learning?

This involves a discussion of what constitutes learning. Is empathy part of the content of learning or a form of teaching? For the subject of rhetoric, it is probably both, since we teach students to enter into a relationship every time they write.

Gender Issues

Facilitator: Janice Hays, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Recorder: Nancy Hayward, English Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania, 15705

There were six participants at the session, all female. Hays began the session by giving some of her background work with intellectual, ethical and emotional development particularly her work with the Perry Scheme and post-Perry research on women's development in these areas, particularly work described in the book, Womens Ways of Knowing, by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule. Subsequent research finds that women are more intuitive and synthetic in their thinking than are men. Hays reported the implications of this research for college teaching: that women need to be confirmed in their "connected" ways of knowing, but that they also need to learn "separate" ways of knowing. Men, by contrast, need to be encouraged to function in more "connected" modes as well as in the "separate" ones into which most of them have been socialized. She also related these findings to questions of learning style and cautioned against reifying these findings about behavior into "essentialist" characterizations. The group also discussed research showing that learner characteristics differ by gender during the college years and how male and female students act differently in the classroom. The group considered whether or not we, as women faculty members, see women students "receding" in the classroom--as research suggests they do. We agreed that we don't observe this phenomenon in our courses, but wondered about the situation in male-taught classes. Lois Rosen, a participant at the table, said that her female students report that male teachers tend to silence them.

We also discussed the importance of keeping journals in all courses and agreed that students need some structure in carrying out these journal assignments, particularly students at earlier levels of human development. It also appeared that it was productive to talk in the classroom about the "connected" and "separate" ways of learning and knowing. We also discussed the issue of unconscious eruption of meaning into the language of student writing. Anne Mullen reported that she wants students to look for problems in their writing that are indicative of other problems--for instance, disjunctive prose--and that looking at such problems is like deconstructing the student's writing. That is, areas that frequently seem to present problems in terms of the whole composition may be those very places in which the most original thinking is taking place, and students need encouragement not to "clean up" such spots but to open them up and explore them.

The group also discussed the issue of relationships between women faculty and female students. Lois Rosen said that she thinks women come in to office hours more to share their personal life and that men come in to talk about the course; that women students are more willing to share personal information, and that they seem to need to share "secrets," whereas male students almost refuse to do this.

The group concluded by hoping that there would by a session and a workshop on gender at the Think Tank next year.

Archetypes

Recorder: Gary N. Christensen, Macomb Community College

Participants: Susan Becker, Susan Blau, Gary Christensen, Diane Colvin, Helen Fox, Dick Graves, Judy Rosenberg, Terry Tomasak

We discussed archetypes as they apply to our roles as teachers and researchers. Archetypes are ancient story types and character models which have passed to us through oral tradition and stories.

We discussed a daughter's reactions to her father's death and our group's reactions to death and deaths. We discussed the Shopping MALL and its prior forms in other cultures. The mall has the potential to become the world village with birth to grave opportunities awaiting those who choose to reside and shop in its "shadow." We discussed the MEGA malls which offer a wide variety of shops, water slides, theaters, hotels and motels, nursery service for children while parents shop. This is an extension of the British mall which was a walk area where people went to stroll and present teens usually congregate at the Mall to meet each other and "hang out."

We also discussed the "river" and its roles in our literary heritage and experience. Group members spoke of journal prompts using the river as a starting point for writings about students' experiences with rivers and bodies of water.

I was reminded of the metaphor of "flow" used in psychological circles to describe "Now moment" thinking and action and sports broadcaster using the "flow of the game" and the turning "tide" in changes of momentum in sports contests.

The only information to add is that we spoke of a memoir as a window to our deeper self and that we also discussed transformations--as in the Cinderella myth.

Meditation

Leader: Donald Gallehr, George Mason University

Recorder: Steven B. Katz
North Carolina State University
Raliegh, NC 27685-8105

This session concerned the use of meditation in teaching writing. After introducing ourselves, discussion centered around three questions: what is meditation, how do you do meditation, and how can we apply in to the teaching of writing.

Meditation is a state of relaxation, of enhanced awareness that is a focusing, a "one-pointedness," and/or a "witnessing"--watching thoughts as they come and go, and letting them go. As a technique in writing pedagogy, meditation helps focus the student's mind before writing to eliminate distractions, to clear the mind so the student can write. Although meditation does have as its ultimate purpose the development of a spiritual life, of an asemiotic mind, that purpose can only be achieved by a higher, later stage of meditation, and so does not enter into writing instruction. Writing class does not deal with different states of consciousness, just the first stage, clearing the mind/letting the mind clear before writing. (Much discussion centered around the religious connotations of the word meditation, possible parental reaction to the technique, and whether we even ought to use the name meditation at all in describing to students what we are doing. Opinion varied, and no consensus was sought or reached.)

There are many techniques of meditation that can be used in preparing students to write. The three techniques we used were 1) to pay attention to one particular sound for five minutes; 2) pay attention to thought; 3) do both at the same time.

The point of this exercise is not to dispense with discourse, but to focus attention on the reaction to experience, which we can't see well because of the screen of prior experience. Meditation as a focusing on experience helps break up, clear away this screen. This, like other observational exercises, helps sharpen student writing, and/or changes the stance the student writes out of (public to private mode).

Other techniques: 1) Listen to a tape of your writing three times; listen to a different point each time; deepens your thinking about your writing. 2) Drawing--not object, but lines; again, helps you see object, not screen of experience.

The session concluded with five minutes of meditation, out of which some interesting observations emerged.

Kinetics, Body Wisdom

Leader: Joyce Ann Hancock, Jefferson Community College

Participants: Alice Brand, SUNY Brockport
Peter Elbow, UMass, Amherst
Susan Engman, Monroe Community College
Christina Gibbons, UMass, Amherst (Recorder)
Bill Hamilton, Jefferson Community College

Recorder: Christina Gibbons
RD 2 Box 10F
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Our group explored several physical activities which could be used to stimulate students to have ideas for writing. Our discussion, occurring in and around our activities, was occasional and fragmented.

We started by retiring to a far corner of the ballroom and lying flat on our backs for four or five minutes. Joyce asked us to breathe quietly and not talk. After we sat up, Joyce introduced an unusual looking prop: it was a fat metal tube shaped a bit like a hula hoop which had been pushed into an oval and turned up at the ends. The object was light enough to lift easily and the opening was wide enough to pass over a body from head to toe. Joyce asked us to take turns playing with this object. We could do anything we wanted with it for as long as we liked and then pass it on to someone else in our group. At the end of our time, we were to say only one word.

I jumped right in because the curvature of the object suggested a rocking horse to me. I sat in it and rocked hard enough to make it "walk" across the carpet. Then I tipped it up like a window frame and crouched inside it. Next I held it like a giant bow and pretended to shoot an arrow into the air. Finally I stood up and held the object high overhead before presenting it to Bill. "Freedom!" I said. Bill took his turn with the object, putting his foot through it, poking it, stepping into and out of it. Peter and Alice took their turns. Susan, a dancer, twirled round and round, and we ended up holding it between us and twisting it around. At the end of our time together, we gathered around the object, held it together, and thanked each other in a communal closure. "Powerful," someone said.

Here are some of the comments I remember people making: Sometimes students don't bring their minds to class; if we're only getting students in body anyway, let's work with that .... Let's not depend on our minds alone to get us through school ... The object becomes a metaphor; it's finding a subject nonverbally .... You can fool around with the subject.... The topic can run away with you.... It explodes the notion of correct and incorrect

.... You could use any object and ask students to describe it ... It creates connections between people ... It could be a sexual object, a rite of spring, the object of a fight. (Joyce and Peter began a tug of war.)

Joyce explained that most students are rather tentative at first and need encouragement to get engaged. She described one dramatic instance, however, when a boy took the object, raised it over his head like bat, and swung it down on the carpet so hard that it broke, releasing a cloud of rusty dust. "Pain," he said, walking away. This shocked everyone into being fully present and aware.

Joyce added: Following the stunned silence, the instructor asked the students what had changed in their understanding of the symbolic object (the students were at that time in the semester attempting to define and restrict their research paper topics on the general theme of "The American Experience.") "The American Experience is hollow, full of red dust," said one student. The class began to interact physically with the two broken pieces of what they now began to see more profoundly than before as an emblem of national life. "It's broken into, cannot be repaired." "But it's opened up now, and can embrace more than it could as a small, tightly defined thing." Conversation flowed, movement was much freer and more creative, and interactions between students was livelier and more intimate than before. Finally, one of the black students said to the class, "O.K. Now I understand what I've been trying to express with my topic idea. I want to write about the fragmented nature of black leadership. I want to explain the necessary tensions between Martin Luther King and Ralph Abernathy and Coretta Scott King. I see, now, with the breaking of the object, that it is important that a strong movement have fragmented leadership to ensure its survival."

And I conclude with part of a letter I wrote to Joyce: The tube play was the most vivid part of the whole four days for me. There is something about being in a comfortable vacuum like that -- almost on vacation and among comfortable strangers -- that makes it possible to be very free and inventive. If I make a fool of myself, well, so what, I don't need to see these people again or work with them every day. I don't need to preserve dignity here. It's fascinating how fast a communal feeling develops in such a vacuum.

Creative Dramatics

Facilitator: Kathleen Bell, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

We centered our discussion on the use of role playing in the discovery of voice and audience. First, we identified our assumptions about students' implicit understanding of voice--the ability from infancy to strategically use behavior to evoke different tones of response from an audience. The group agreed, however, that the academic/classroom context restricts and inhibits this natural expression, thus convincing students that their voices have no legitimacy unless they know the right answer.

Creative dramatics can help to break the cycle of inhibition. Role playing makes their voices audible and gives students the opportunity to exercise expression within various contexts. This audibility, Peter Elbow tells us, is fundamental to discovering the authority and resonance needed to create meaningful texts. With role playing, students also gain a heightened sense of audience--who wants to know and what they need to know--in very real terms. Perhaps the overriding principle we identified is that language needs to be "alive" for students if we expect them to commit to the struggle of putting it in writing.

PRESENTATIONS

Guidelines of Composing

Leader: Sondra Perl, Lehman College, Bronx, New York

Recorder: Demetrice A. Worley, Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois

Is knowing only in our brains or is it in our bodies? Maybe it is cognitive, but it should include not only the mind but also the body. The question becomes: How do we bring a felt-sense into the classroom? How do we teach our students to use in constructing their texts?

This is not a quick process and it takes about 40 minutes to do it well. The best part is the reflection time when people talk about what they felt and what they did.

Guidelines of Composing

I will ask you questions. Ask yourself the question silently. When something comes, jot it down and stay easy and open. You will produce a series of notes for yourself (not to share). They may be used to start a draft.

Close your eyes. If you are comfortable, shake out hands, relax, notice if you have any tension, concentrate on breathing, feel yourself settle into the room. Notice the state you are in. You can come back to this state at the beginning of each question.

QUESTIONS:

#1 How am I right now? What's on my mind?

#2 What else is on my mind? What is new today? Is there a particular place or topic on my mind?

(Writing)

Breathe and come back to your resting state.

#3 Now that I have a list, is there anything I am overlooking? A color, a place, a dream?

Go easy -- jot down whatever comes to mind.

(Writing)

I'll intrude -- Which one of these items draws my attention, says me. How do you know the one that is speaking to you? Circle or star the one that draws your attention. We'll take that issue, that theme, and put it on top of a new page. Take

another breath, write two things yo know a lot about on this issue as quickly as possible, using freewriting, write what you already know.

(Writing)

#4 What are all the parts I know about this topic? What comes to mind here?

Take three minutes to write.

(Writing)

I'll interrupt you now. Put aside everything that came easily. Return to your calm breathing. Return to the whole topic--not the pieces. Hold the topic in your hand, the whole topic. Talk to it--what's so important about this topic? What is the heart of this topic? Listen to your body. If you get an image or a word. What is it? Write about. Listen to your body; see if can feel when you get it--feel the feeling of "yeah! that's it." If you are wondering and can't feel anything, what's so hard about this? What is in the way--get a word or an image--write about, explore it. With time, you can.

(Writing)

#5 What's missing? What didn't get down on paper? Look for a word or an image, your body to indicate what was missed.

(Writing)

#6 Where is this leading? Is there a point to where I'm headed? Look for a word, image, feeling and then write about it.

(Writing)

#7 When you feel you're nearing an end, say is this complete? Look to your body for a response. If the answer is no, look to your body for a feeling word or image and write about this.

(Writing)

#8 If I were to take this further, what genre would it take? Voice? Position? Audience? Take notes on these thoughts and feelings.

(Writing)

#9 Look through your notes and write what this was like for you.

(Writing)

If we had time, we would discuss what did and didn't work. Felt sense helps us locate and find those things that we can't find in a logical manner. It is a form of hand holding. It lets us open a large space where it is safe to look. When writing isn't going well, we <u>know</u> it. It's okay to look and see what comes.

End of presentation.

Voice

Leader: Peter Elbow, University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Recorder: Anne Mullin
Idaho State University

Through what he termed "bits and pieces," Peter led us in an active exploration of several aspects of voice in a text. He began by asking us to write for three or four minutes "some words to share." The object would not be to receive feedback or evaluation, but to produce some text that we could use in our consideration of voice. Before we did that, however, Peter gave us some thoughts derived from his longtime "wrestling" with the concepts.

Two premises stand out: first, spoken language has far more signals (loudness, pitch, speed, tone, accent, rhythmic patterns, etc.) than written; second, humans have a prior and more primary relationship with spoken language than written. Thus, when we encounter printed texts, it takes effort NOT to hear (or seek) the "voice" in the text -- a strong counter-argument to those who suggest we oughtn't to be concerned with notions of voice.

Other points:

The concept of voice is both important and contested. Some people do believe it is possible to put out words with courage, words that "get somewhere" and "connect with others" just as it is possible to recognize the lack of these qualities. Other people (Derrida, for one) find all wrong the idea of a presence behind (or under, or within) words; still others link the idea of "voice" with that of an unchanging self, and find this "not only silly but dangerous."

That the term voice has become a "lightning rod" attracting opposition and ridicule attests, of course, to its significance. Some of the antipathy may be traced to confusion between "voice" and "speaking" and the problems of evaluating spoken vs. written discourse.

Further difficulty arises from falsely equating "voice" with "good writing." In fact, it may be that the quality of "voice" (the sense of a person behind the words) occurs when the writing is "falling apart." We could more confidently say, "in the long run, voice might LEAD to better writing."

"Voice" is too rich a concept to confine in any one meaning for the term. A "quick overview" shows three essential concepts and three sub-concepts within the third:

1. Audible Voice gives us a sense that we are hearing speech qualities in a text.

2. Dramatic Voice gives us a sense of a particular character/persona in a text.

3. Authentic Voice gives us a sense that it is the writer's own voice we are experiencing as: (a) recognizable and distinctive; (b) authoritative, claiming the right to speak, assertive; and (c) resonant with authenticity.

Peter argued that points 1, 2, 3a and 3b are relatively non-controversial -- thus assuring the usefulness of voice as a critical term. Only 3c constitutes a "swamp," in which efforts to achieve a consensual definition are likely to founder.

He is also pursuing the study of words as associated with magic and spells, as well as the study of breath, voiced air, as the link between body and mind. "It might be useful to get at how writing can be more voiced if we give that body a bigger chance at it," he said, concluding this portion of the presentation.

For the remaining five minutes, we experienced, in groups of three, as much as we could of a sequence of exercises designed to increase voice and body connections to our texts. Here are instructions for the sequence:

1. Read your text aloud once.

2. Read your text aloud again, this time with someone's hand on your back.

3. Read it while standing up and moving or gesturing in some way.

4. Perform the text non-verbally.

5. Watch as another person responds to your text non-verbally.

During the discussion period following the exercise, participants described feeling various degrees of connectedness, empathy, enhancement of meaning and affect, tension and release, support, tone and volume (see notes from the discussion period, next page).

The following words attempt to present the different voices participating in the group conversation which Dick Graves so ably facilitated. Comments clustered into three fascinating and related themes: fear as an inhibitor of voice at both physiological and psychological levels, silence as a resource that strengthens voice, and the power of connecting minds, body, and voice.

The concept of fear as an inhibitor was expressed as "an allergy . . . I feel my insides tighten up and shut down," a "pathology" when "people literally lose their voices under stress," a concomitant of social situations like conferences ("such a waste when people read their papers with no voice") or classrooms where teachers cling to lecture notes rather than risk their own voices.

Participants noted how "voice, freedom, expression and openness are all connected" and made reference to Janoff's "silent scream." A comment about "individuals who willfully remain silent, withhold communication, say after a traumatic experience" raised questions about" silence as power or silence as victimization," prompting more discussion of the power of silence. Noting productive classroom silences such as during freewriting or sustained silent reading or the wait time after a question is asked, members suggested activities such as Quaker readings (each person has a written text but remains silent until moved to voice a passage) and "stripping language away" (forbidding speech and literally putting books and all written texts out of reach) to create a "preliteral state" with only non-verbal communication possible. The writing that comes after such activities is then charged with heightened power.

In discussing the sequence of activities Peter Elbow had instructed, participants commented on a sense of connectedness. Written texts, spoken words, and physical vibrations connected as people read with others' hands on their backs; readers and writers, speakers and listeners were also linked. In one group two listeners "felt connected" to the speaker and also to each other through her. The touching of hands to "heart," the enhancement of sound through touch, and the comfort, support and release of tension were among experiences reported. Noting that there may be times when "voice is an intrusion," and times when physical contact may also be uncomfortable or intrusive, discussants generally agreed that by connecting thought, speech and touch we were responding holistically, in "a whole additional dimension," truly "beyond the cognitive domain." As one responder put it, "It breaks down a wall. We can enter into the words unconsciously."

Peter Elbow, U Mass/Amherst

VOICE IN WRITING: THREE SENSES OF THE TERM

> "I don't mean style...I mean voice: something that begins at around the back of the knees and reaches well above the head." [Ionoff, in Philip Roth's The Anatomy Lesson]
>
> We write not with the fingers but with the whole person. [Virginia Woolf, Orlando]
>
> A dramatic necessity goes deep into the nature of the sentence. . . . All that can save [sentences] is the speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination. [Robert Frost, A Way Out]

Voice in writing is a fuzzy, undefined, controversial concept. Thus the need to define and distinguish:

1. Audible voice: do we hear the text?
2. Dramatic voice(s): who do we hear in the text? (We can always hear someone if we listen hard.)
3. One's own voice: does the text somehow fit the actual writer?
   - 3a. One's own voice as 'distinctive, recognizable voice'.
   - 3b. One's own voice as 'having a voice' or 'having the authority to speak'.
   - 3c. One's own voice as 'authentic' or having 'resonance' or 'having the whole person behind it'.

If these distinctions seem too technical or artificial, realize that they accomplish a a crucial goal: they limit the serious mess and fighting about this controversial term to the restricted space of category 3c: "authentic voice." That is, we can usually reach a reasonable if not unanimous or certain agreement about audible voice (which pieces or sections of writing send sounds up off the page); and about dramatic voice (what kind of person is implied in a piece or section of writing); and about voice as authority to speak (which pieces or sections show the writer trusting herself to speak out). Thus these distinctions make the term voice a more usable and trustworthy tool for describing writing and teaching writing. But the question of "authentic voice" will stay slippery and controversial and vexed for a long time. It's because I am interested in authentic voice or resonance that I want to work at making audible, dramatic, distinctive, and authoritative more solid and usable terms. I don't want the controversy about authentic voice to make people throw away the whole notion of voice.

Example of audible voice.

> Come into my cell. Make yourself at home. Take the chair; I'll sit on the cot. No? You prefer to stand by the window? I understand. You'll like my little view. Have you noticed that the narrower the view the more you can see? [from Walker Percy, Lancelot]

Audible voice.

> The artist was so much greater than the man. The man is rather a tiresome New Englander of the ethical mystical-transcentalist sort: Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne, etc. So unrelieved, the solemn ass even in humour. So hopelessly au grand serieux you feel like saying: Good God, what does it matter? If life is a tragedy, or a farce, or a disaster, or anything else, what do I care! Let life be what it likes. Give me a drink, that's what I want just now.
>
> For my part, life is so many things I don't care what it is. It's not my affair to sum it up. Just now it's a cup of tea. This morning it was wormwood and gall. Hand me the sugar.
>
> One wearies of the grand serieux. There's something false about it. And that's Melville. Oh, dear, when the solemn ass brays! brays! brays! [from D. H. Lawrence on Moby Dick in Studies in Classic American Literature]

No audible voice.

> In connection with the Offer to Purchase for Cash All Outstanding Units of Beneficial Interest of American Royalty Trust (the "Unit Offer") and the Offer to Purchase All Outstanding Shares of Common Stock, $3.33 Cumulative Convertible Preferred Stock, $2.28 Cumulative Preferred Stock and $1.65 Cumulative Preferred Stock (the "Stock Offer") each dated August 7, 1986 by FFCO Inc., PETRO-LEWIS CORPORATION (the "Company"), and, in the case of the Unit Offer, American Royalty Producing Company ("ARPCO") and PLC-ARPC, Inc. ("PLC-ARPC"), by letters dated August 7, 1986 (the "Recommendation Letters"), have conveyed their recommendations regarding the Unit Offer and the Stock Offer. [from a letter to stockholders]

Here's a passage that seems to me to lack audible voice but nevertheless count as good writing: shrewd, it makes an important point, it is even architecturally well-formed. In short, writing without audible voice doesn't have to be bad writing.

> ...a poet does not write poetry but individual poems. And these are inevitably, as finished wholes, instances of one or another poetic kind, differentiated not by any necessities of the linguistic instrument of poetry but primarily by the nature of the poet's conception, as finally embodied in his poem, of a particular form to be achieved through the representation, in speech used dramatically or otherwise, of some distinctive state of feeling, of moral choice, or action, complete in itself and productive of a certain emotion or complex of emotions in the reader.
>
> R.S. Crane, Critical Monism, 96.

Audibility is heightened by the unorthodox syntax and punctuation in this passage from Gertrude Stein. She arranges it that we must, as it were, say it to ourselves:

> And what does a comma do, a comma does nothing but make easy a thing that if you like it enough is easy enough without the comma. . . . It is not like stopping altogether which is what a period does stopping altogether has something to do with going on, but taking a breath well you are always taking a breath and why emphasize one breath rather than another breath. Anyway that is the way I felt about it and I felt that about it very very strongly. And so I almost never used a comma. ["Poetry and Grammar" in Lectures in America.]

ABOUT DRAMATIC VOICE. It is crucial to recognize that there is dramatic voice in all of the texts above—indeed in any text. Sometimes that person in there is loud and obvious (as in the D. H. Lawrence) and so readers will tend to agree in describing him. But other times that dramatic voice is faint and hard to hear so we have to work at inferring him or her, and readers will disagree about what kind of person they think they are hearing. Also, a text might imply conflicting dramatic voices. In fact most texts of any length carry strands of several voices—if we listen closely enough and read more than a few paragraphs. Dramatic voice is a noncontroversial, bread and butter concept in conventional literary criticism. See Roger Cherry for distinctions that one can draw between the following sub-terms: 'ethos', 'implied author', 'persona'.

An example of double-voicing:

> Parker's wife was sitting on the front porch floor, snapping beans. Parker was sitting in the step, some distance away, watching her sullenly. She was plain, plain. The skin on her face was thin and drawn as tight as the skin on an onion and her eyes were grey and sharp like the points of two icepicks. [Flannery O'Connor's "Parker's Back." The outside narrator's voice suddenly incorporates a bit of Parker's voice in the phrase "plain, plain." Cited by Booth.]

Helen Vendler speaks of one's own voice as distinctive recognizable voice—speaking of Sylvia Plath:

> She had worked hard at imitating Dylan Thomas, and had early mastered certain course sound effects. But in a late line like 'The shadow of ringdoves, chanting but easing nothing,' she has given up on a bald imitation of Thomas and has found her own voice.
> ["An Intractable Metal." New Yorker, 2/15/82, p. 131.]

"Distinctive" or "Recognizable" voice is sometimes used in a more narrow sense—referring to writing that literally resembles the writer's own speech.

> Sometimes there is a 'singing' of voice in writing. I have often been shocked at "hearing" a friend's voice upon reading his or her latest article or book.
> [Ihde, Don. Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound. Ohio UP, 1976, x.]

ABOUT ONE'S OWN VOICE AS HAVING A VOICE OR HAVING THE AUTHORITY TO SPEAK. D. H. Lawrence, above, is a good example where the person in there positively exudes a sense of his own authority to speak: he has lots of confident voice. It's also distinctively vintage "D. H. Lawrence"—one of his characteristic voices, anyway. But is it "authentic" "resonant" with "his whole self behind it"—does it "ring true"? Here readers will quarrel. Presumably the judgment cannot be made unless we read lots of D. H. Lawrence.

ABOUT AUTHENTIC OR RESONANT VOICE. Here is an example of writing with lots of audible and dramatic voice; yet it is sufficiently odd or fishy or off that most readers agree that it is not authentic

r resonant. Though of course it is enormously skilled and fun.

Dear Mr. Coors:

I think your advertising campaign is doin' good. The reason I think that is I see a lot of gold Coors cans every time I go running.

A year ago, I saw mostly Budweiser and Miller cans on roadsides where people fling them out of cars. Now in some places, I see more Coors than anything else so I figure sales must be up.

That's kind of a surprise to me. I vote with my taste buds, my wife says, and I figured Coors wouldn't go over big.

For myself, Coors don't do much. I was in the Navy a long time ago—when we had sailing ships, my wife tells people—and I got to New Zealand in what you call my formative years and developed a taste for dark beers.

Most Americans don't like it much. Dark beer, I mean, not New Zealand. Yeah, there's a ruckus right now about the nuclear ships, but when you see it, New Zealand looks like Colorado with beaches. You might like it there yourself, the mountains and all, except you might have to drive truck or something because I don't think there's much market for your beer. &c &c.

[from a letter to the Wall Street Journal]

BOUT AUTHENTIC OR RESONANT VOICE. I don't think we can make judgments about this slippery dimension of voice unless we read long samples. It's a matter of listening for internal cues about whether a person presents his or herself in words in a way that we sense as fitting with what we sense the person is really like. Nevertheless, I can't resist gesturing at the concept with two short examples.

Suddenly Mr. Ramsay raised his head as he passed and looked straight at her, with his distraught wild gaze which was yet so penetrating, as if he saw you, for one second, for the first time, for ever; and she pretended to drink out of her empty coffee cup so as to escape his—to escape his demand on her, to put aside a moment longer that imperious need. And he shook his head at her, and strode on ("Alone" she heard him say, "Perished" she heard him say) and like everything else this strange morning the words became symbols, write themselves all over the grey-green walls.

[From Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse. Many readers find this novel enormously powerful. I would ascribe a substantial portion of that power to the her having somehow made these words carry the whole self.

Poetry: III

Adrienne Rich

Even if we knew the children were all asleep
and healthy the ledgers balanced the water running
clear in the pipes
and all the prisoners free
Even if every word we wrote by then
were honest the sheer heft
of our living behind it
not these sometimes
lax indolent lines
these litanies
Even if we were told not just by friends
that this was honest work
Even if each of us didn't wear
a brass locket with a picture
of a strangled woman a girlchild seen through the crotch
Even if someone had told us, young: This is not a key
nor a peacock feather
not a kite nor a telephone
This is the kitchen sink the grinding-stone
would we give ourselves
more calmly over feel less criminal joy
when the thing comes as it does come
clarifying grammar
and the fixed and mutable stars—?

[from Your Native Land, Your Life, 1984]

[Lines 5-7 give one of the best explanations or models for authentic voice.]

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Wrap Up Discussion

Leaders: Peter Elbow, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts
Sondra Perl, Lehman College, Bronx, New York
Gabriele Rico, San Jose State University, San Jose, California

Recorder: Demetrice A. Worley, Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois

Gabriele Rico (G.R.): People physically lose their voices/ stress/body-mind connections

Participants (P): People in the conference are reading papers. They are without "voice"

Peter Elbow (P.E.): The academic world is a scary place, people are on guard.

P: Voice, freedom, expression are all tied together. Students writing in their journals are screaming. They are writing for the first time in their voice.

P: When people read, they hear a voice, but they aren't speaking it when they read the paper.

P: Voice is an assertion of self.

PE: For those who "don't" speak, when they have a voice, it does have power.

P: We have a tradition of silence in the classroom. Meditation is an extension of this--reading, prewriting, viewing projects--we need to tie in creative pedagogies--imaging, drawing, meditation can be used in these silences. Students should be able to court silences and use it to their advantages.

GR: Quaker readings allow student to become comfortable with the silences. People pick up where they want to enter.

P: Try to get students to a preliterate state. Then make them come back to literate state.

Alice Brand: Physical connection, hand on elbows, back, meant a lot to me. How did others feel?

P: Tension changes when I felt another hand on my back.

P: I felt connected to the other listener and the writer.

PE: Some students don't feel comfortable. I tell them to choose someone they trust.

PE: If I'm trying to get students to read, sometimes the hand gives them courage to read.

P: I felt connected to the other 50 people in the group.

P: Why does the touch influence the sound?

P: Touch gave me support. Studies show babies need touch; our society has gotten mixed up about boundaries.

PE: Society keeps us from making loud noises. We have to make fools of ourselves; to experience contact with the person. I write it's desirable. Not indication of good writing, but a human pleasure to be in contact with a person.

P: We have been put under a spell of silence. We have to be aware of the strength of the words that will come when the silence is released.

P: Placing a hand on the back is placing the hand close to the heart.

P: Can touch be intrusion?

PE: Yes. It [touch] has to be by choice.

P: We talked about how writing could heal physical problems.

P: Does touching make you a different reader?

P: Touching and reading made cognition a more whole operation.

P: I experienced Gabriele. I experienced her words.

PE: The person is being an ally. Standing behind them. Person is helping speaker push back against the audience.

P: I disagreed with what the person was saying, but touching her interrupted this cognition process.

End of discussion.

Clustering

Facilitator: Gabriele Rico, San Jose State University

We became poets through clustering. *(Clustering is a highly visual, nonlinear representation of thoughts. A sample appears at the end of this report.)* Gabriele had told us that if we followed her simple directions, we would write poetry. And we did. Our steps were these:

- We listened to Gabriele read us the poem "The Death of Marilyn Monroe" by Sharon Olds.
- We listened a second time, but this time began to cluster when any particular word or image struck us.
- We clustered until we felt it was time to begin writing
- We wrote, our re-creations of the original poem. *(Re-creations are the poems or prose we wrote in response to the original poem.)*

All of the clustering and writing steps were to be finished within 3 minutes. Impossible, we thought. Looks of doubt crossed the table. Gabriele insisted on the time limit, saying speed was the key. It gave us no time to monitor or edit our thoughts. There was only time to spill our personal re-creations out on paper. The intensity of the experience was surprising.

After writing we talked about our process. (Gabriele allowed us this safety net. We did not have to talk about or read our re-creations unless we chose to.) We discussed how we had felt the right time to begin clustering and then felt the right time to begin to write.

Volunteers read their poems (re-creations). The variety underscored the many ways in which we had each responded to "The Death of Marilyn Monroe." Some were memories of the past, some were intensely personal reflections on family, some were responses to the original poem's rhythm or a particular phrase.

Gabriele explained that she begins every class period with clustering. Whether students are writing or preparing to discuss literature, clustering generates multiple perspectives which might not emerge through more traditional discussion methods.

The session ended with her brief explanation to us of how clustering can be used not only for short exercises like ours, but for directing even lengthy academic papers.

This cluster emerged from listening to "The Death of Marilyn Monroe."